

City of Germantown

SPIRIT Nomination Form

Employee's Name: Michelle McDonnell

Dept: Parks & Recreation

Nominator's Name: Melody Pittman

Date: September 13, 2012

You would be hard pressed to find someone who works for the city of Germantown who has not encountered Michelle McDonnell in some form or fashion. By the nature of her job, she works with a wide variety of departments. Actually, it is her personality, though, that is hard to miss. Michelle seems to have an endless source of energy that she brings to every event, every program, every class, every meeting. Fortunately her enthusiasm is contagious, which works to her advantage since the majority of the work she does is heavily dependent upon attracting a large contingent of volunteers to assist. She not only sends out emails city-wide to entice staff to volunteer, she also invites groups like high school honor clubs and nonprofit groups to participate.

Often using begged, borrowed, and donated funds or supplies to supplement her programs and events, Michelle is proactive in making contacts with potential donors and volunteers both inside and outside the city whether she is somewhere formally representing Germantown or in an after-hours setting. Those who attend her events come looking to be personally greeted (and hugged in some cases) by Michelle because she always makes them feel welcomed and appreciated. This is particularly true when the event includes persons with disabilities. With this group, Michelle has made it her personal responsibility to ensure that each of these individuals is afforded respect and courteous attention by both staff and volunteers. Michelle has made it her goal to take photographs of each participant at many of the special needs events, create a frame, and then present these wonderful mementos to each person.

Michelle is continuously looking for opportunities to improve and expand the events she plans, making adjustments in order to serve citizens in ways that exceed their expectations. She has developed extensive evaluation tools to refer to in making positive adjustments in planning specific programs. Her organizational ability would be highly rated by most. She can tell you in detail the who, what, where, when, and why of every single thing she has planned, not to mention show you the color coated, tabbed, dated, and indexed notebooks that exists for every program/event she has implemented. The decisions she makes are always based on evaluations made of past outcomes. In an effort to increase participation at concerts in the park, Michelle chose to combine some of her other events like art for young children and cook-outs to encourage a wider age range of participation. To make it possible for the Safety Commission to have exposure to a larger audience, she invited them to inspect children's car seats as part of Touch a Truck. These sorts of innovations have made so many of her programs successful.

Often other city departments have difficulty telling Michelle, "no." Through her enthusiasm and her persistent positive attitude, she has partnered with the library, the Athletic Club, GPAC, the Safety Commission, the Germantown Woman's Club, and more. She is the cornerstone for Touch a Truck at the library, making sure that all the city services are included. Rarely has she failed to invite anyone with an unusual or interesting vehicle to join the fun. Additionally, she has made it possible for persons with disabilities to participate in a variety of activities throughout the city, including pool parties at GAC, concerts at GPAC, and Karaoke at the

library. For each of these events she provides the information for the FYI, sends numerous email reminders, makes phone calls, and often mails postcards, just to be sure that no one misses out on coming.

In order to continue to learn about new approaches and to develop her repertoire, Michelle participates extensively in professional development activities. She is a graduate of both Leadership Germantown and Play Like a Champion. Additionally, she attends the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA) Conference each year. This past year, she planned and hosted the 2012 West District TRPA Workshop at the Pickering Center, arranging for a variety of speakers to address the participants.

I think Michelle McDonnell demonstrates the core values of service excellence every day. She exemplifies the SPIRIT of the city of Germantown with her dedication to teamwork and serving all segments of our community.